

TRIBHUVAN UNIVERSITY

Women's Suffering in Manjushree Thapa's Novel *The Tutor of History*

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This thesis entitled “Women’s Suffering in Manjushree Thapa’s novel *The Tutor of History*” in Manjushree Thapa’s *The Tutor of History* by Rajiv Regmi submitted to the Central Department of English, Tribhuvan University, has been approved by the under signed members of the Research Committee.

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ABSTRACT

This MA thesis is the probation into the plight of village women in Nepal, as depicted in Manjushree Thapa's novel *The Tutor of History*. In this novel, women are found suffering economically, politically and socially in tradition-bound patriarchal society that still holds firm the notions of inferiority of women and superiority of men. Deprivation of education and personal property, lack of self-determination, submission only to household chores and political exclusion make these women vulnerable to the abuses inflicted by men and help patriarchal social system come as an obstacle on the path of women's progress, dignity and freedom. The continuous discrimination, repression and atrocities meted to innocent village women, however, lead these women to decide to form a "mother's group" in order to help each other to relieve themselves from suffering and to defend against exploitation of women. Through this novel, Manjushree Thapa wants to suggest that women must unite themselves and form such a "mother's group", like those formed throughout Nepal after the down of democracy in 1990 as a result of women's growing conscience, to develop themselves and, thus, finally to probably liberate all suffering women from every type of discrimination. In this way, Thapa emphasizes on the development of women and their freedom from being exploited by men in order to bring peace and prosperity in the country.

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I. INTRODUCTION

This thesis seeks to analyze how man-made patriarchal social system, attitudes and values make simple folk women, like Binita Dahal and Sani, suffer tremendously economically, politically and socially in Manjushree Thapa's debut novel *The Tutor of History*. For this very purpose, instead of covering every woman from this novel in detail, I focus only on few prominent female characters to probe their plight and their attempts at liberating themselves from the cruel clutches of male-dominated social hegemony.

On the surface, this novel seems to reflect political degeneration and its effect upon the people of Khairani Tar. The presentation of extreme voracity of political parties, formation of government, politics based on cash and conspiracy, the scenario of how the election campaign with cheapening of politics is held, and the caricature of large political parties that are ruined by the avaricious nature and that excessively lack strong dedication to public welfare apparently echo the elegy of democracy during 1990s in Nepal.

Manjushree Thapa stands before and after 1990s and jeers at the period 1990s.

Connecting Thapa's biography with the text, Sally Acharya for Sawnet Review writes:

It's perhaps not surprising that politics should be so central to the novel. Thapa is the US-educated (but now Kathmandu-based) daughter of Bekh Bahadur Thapa, former ambassador to the US and current ambassador to India. She has spent all her life around people who think politics are important. (1-2)

Thapa ridicules the political customs mostly in *The Tutor of History*, which has become probably her most popular work. To open the party, to fool the people with sweet words, to talk of democracy and ruin it for the sake of self-interest, have been the ideals

of political parties. The writer not only satirizes party leaders' hypocrisy and mischief, but also mocks at the people who join the party for particular purpose. Indicating this point, Sally again writes:

After all, this is a country where the notion that 'the personal is political' takes on a contentious literal meaning. No village tea house is without its political chatter, no school without its factions. To join a party isn't just an ideological act, but a way to land a job or get a phone line, or ensure support if a neighbor encroaches on your cornfields. (2)

Truly, the novel begins with the huge campaign of political leaders for parliamentary election at Khaireni Tar and ends with election results. In the middle, it shows how political matters become crucial part of life for the people during election period. This is absolutely true, if we concentrate only upon few male characters or look only at the surface meaning of the story. Having penetrated this outer layer of the story, we encounter with irrecoverably victimized women suffering hard in patriarchal society.

In the novel, one of the women, who suffer pathetically in the society that blindly believes in male-versed attitudes towards women as being utterly inferior to men with no comparison, is a widow Binita Dahal, 'a lone woman, still young, draped in a gray widow's faria, a woman unloosened from the custody of men'(7). After accidental death of her husband, Binita opened a tea shop at Khaireni Tar to sustain herself, her six-year-old daughter Tripti and a young cousin sister Sani, who at the age of sixteen is taking literacy classes. Though having to face many male costumers daily in order to serve them tea, she 'had maintained reserve with strangers and townspeople alike' (7).

However lacking any male patronage in this atmosphere of insecurity, she is vulnerable to any mistreatment from men. Despite her wise effort to deviate male customers from any ill intension towards her by decorating her teashop with the posters of Hindu gods and goddesses that sanctify the surroundings, she is cruelly abused physically by no one but her husband's uncle Kainlo-kaka, the patriarch of Dahal clan. The early death of her husband Rajesh Dahal, who used to teach at college campus at Khaireni Tar, deprived her of any family securely to live with. Only at the peaceful surroundings of the family members which would have at least a single man, she could live secured life as a social creature. Then, she wouldn't have to be alert twenty four hours a day against any possibility of ill-natured behavior of men. Once she is offered to come and live with the family house of Kainlo-kaka by his 'tradition-bound' wife who lives an hour's walk south from the bazaar of Khaireni Tar, across Seti river.

Still now, Binita is thought to be so much inferior that she would not be allowed to cook for herself and her daughter in the kitchen, but outside the house using clay stove. She decides not to live in that house with traditional people, who take her as an inferior creature who would defile kitchen, if she is allowed to be there. This family eagerly wants Binita to live in their house with them only because no any daughter-in-law of this Dahal clan had yet tried to defy the male-versed rules of their family that would not allow any women to try to live independently by herself. What Binita is doing is only the tremendous challenge to the rules and regulations of Dahal clan. She is even threatened by saying that people may doubt her chastity and think she is selling more than cups of tea.

Kainlo-kaka, the respected old man of Dahal clan with patriarchal authority, is

completely opposite to what he looks outwardly in the society. Instead of providing parental love, care and security to widow daughter-in-law Binita, he commits unpardonable sin brutally with animalistic passion to her. She becomes the victim of physical violence defenselessly at brutal atmosphere. Dumbfound by unbelievable, unexpected and never guessed activity of such an authority, she passively bears all the abuses from Kainlo-kaka, who thinks of her as nothing but an animal or playing object and enjoys by giving torture to her physically as well as mentally. In this way, living in the society dominated by orthodox patriarchs including the great sinner Kainlo-kaka, Binita suffers continuously only being a woman. She is no more than an animal in the eyes of these men.

Another example of the female destroyed irrecoverably by the patriarchal society that tends to perpetuate the notions of inferiority of women and superiority of men is widow Binita's cousin sister, Madhu alias Sani, an orphaned teenager at the age of sixteen. This tradition-bound society shows cruelly too much bias against Sani to the extent that she is defamed in the society for the wrongs she never did. Sani, the perfect and most beautiful girl in Khaireni Tar, is thus deprived of good name notwithstanding. There is no doubt that she is good and perfect girl the young boys longed for and the most parents wanted to make their own daughter-in-law in this Khaireni Tar. Surely, she could be married to the young man either in Indian Gurkhas or, at least, in Nepal army. Many beautiful words have come from the pen of Manjushree Thapa to spill on the pages throughout the novel in order to explain Sani's dazzling beauty and acute perfection. All of Sani's friends constantly eulogizes her, but envy her beauty. There is a suitable mole on her chin and her face 'radiates like a moon on a summer's night'. On the other hand,

attractively oblivious to her own perfection, she works hard all day without tire, but never utters any word of complaint becoming dutiful to her cousin sister, Binita Didi. Being impressed by Sani, people would forget her misfortune and Binita Didi's reputation. To sum up, she was the representative of an ideal woman, as she was 'endowed with all thirty-two qualities of unblemished womanhood'.

Suddenly, the trifle incident debases her character and she falls dramatically from the most beautiful and perfect girl to the mean-spirited girl. This remarkably dramatic fall of Sani is the aftermath of her utter rejection to accept the boy Harsha Bahadur Khadka, the weakest and ugliest person in the society. This probable rejection of highly appreciable girl is proper and natural response to this boy, as she is apparently suited to marry the strongest and most desirable man for a girl, Rawal boy from India. This Khadka boy keeps on following her wherever she goes. On the field, Sani happens to see this boy standing on the edge of the field silhouetted by the sky. He is found following her, but she quickens her pace until she arrives at Binita-didi's teashop. While returning from dilapidated shrine of a goddess Akala-mai with her friend Gaumati, she again captures the view of this very thin boy foolishly still following her. In haste, she rushes off without waiting for her friend to avoid this 'skinny corpse', Khadka boy. Next time she by chance meets again this small-boned boy standing with the head bent meaning that he will keep on following her everywhere. Near to water tap, again, Sani is disturbed by his appearance. Now, she thinks to stay at home to prevent herself from happening to meet this boy. This ugly boy, however, with terrific dare comes in to Binita-didi's teashop to stand just an arm's reach away from Sani. Being perplexed and frightened by this sudden appearance of Khadka boy in that place, she can neither run away nor keep

standing there with that boy. Walking about like a mad woman, she finally utters 'go' to him. Though this terrific boy leaves this place immediately, this incident spreads throughout the village soon, as the boy mentions her name to his friends. Now, people begin to take it as scandalous love tragedy, though Sani did nothing more than saving her pride continuously. This patriarchal society blames her wrongly that she enchanted and encouraged him. She was the most duplicitous, coward and common girl to meet and talk to him, letting come into teashop, lead him to believe that she would marry him and finally reject him mercilessly. This was what the whole society thought. Here again, another female becomes the victim in this patriarchal society only for the wrong she never did, but apparently only for being a female in this male-dominated society. These two examples show how women suffer pathetically in male-dominated society

The half population of the earth, women have been suffering hard in various ways from the time eternal. The ancient myths clearly show how women are subjected and mistreated by men. In the great epic of Hindu mythology, 'Ramayan', women are seen to have been tortured by men with superior authority. Sita's chastity is doubted and questioned, though she sacrifices all the stately pleasure and prosperity for her husband Ram by following him for fourteen years in the jungles. To prove her chastity, however, she finally lets herself be devoured by the earth. In another Hindu epic 'Mahabharata', the longest one in the world, Draupati is sold as cattle by her husband to his cousin brother not even informing her. On the other hand, those women who try to defend themselves by rigorously confronting male with the power of authority are taken in male-dominated society to be insincere, 'cowherd', 'common' or the most 'duplicitous', woman. There are enough examples of such women from Medusa to Circe in

mythologies or from widow Binita Dahal to teenager Madhu in the novel *The Tutor of History*, who are the representatives of monstrous women from the point of view of male. The representatives of patriarchal society generally idealize women as per the situation that benefits them. On the other hand, revolutionary females who try not to succumb to the male authority are taken to be evil.

All feminists voice against the discriminations of women by men in patriarchal society and, to reduce and eventually overcome it, call for the changes in social, economic and political order. Some feminists seek to study the poor condition or existence of women in such society. One of the radical feminists Simone de Beauvoir raises the issue regarding women who had been established in the society with certain stereotypes like women as a flesh, vale of blood, the fertile soil, the material beauty, the curve of the hill, open rose, related to nature, siren, the sap and the soul of the world. Her work *The Second Sex* is the narrative of women's existential otherness and women's suppression by men. She also shows the ambivalence of man's nature towards women as he calls woman goddess, muse or Beatrice on the one hand while associating her with death, demon or cruel stepmother on the other. Women are taken by men to be other subordinate being. Myths have been utilized for men's purpose i.e. to look at women as luxury. In the end, Beauvoir realizes the bondages created by men that obstruct women's free path and make it difficult for women to accept their status as autonomous individual and their womanly destiny.

Feminism is basically concerned with the marginalization of all women; with their being relegated to a secondary position. It represents one of the most crucial social, economic and aesthetic revolutions of modern era. It comes into practice as a severe

attack against female marginalization, as our society with its civilization is pervasively patriarchal; it is male-centered and controlled and organized by men as well as conducted in such a way that women are subordinated to men in all cultural domains. One of the leading American feminists, Kate Millet accordingly sees 'patriarchy as grotesque, increasingly militaristic, increasingly greedy, colonialist, imperialistic, brutal, with a terrible disregard for civil liberties of democratic forms' (511).

In spite of tremendous diversity, feminism is often represented as a single entity and some how concerned with gender equality and freedom of women from the suffering caused by men. The penguin dictionary of sociology defines feminism as a doctrine suggesting that women are systematically disadvantaged in modern society advocating equal opportunities for men and women. The penguin dictionary of politics considers that there has been historical tradition of male exploitation of women. So, feminists eagerly cast an eye upon pitiable condition of women in male-dominated society. There is extremely miserable condition of women in the society which is to be scrutinized and analyzed here in this paper.

This story basically is fictionalized account of election campaign in the bustling roadside town of Khaireni Tar, Tanahun district in Nepal. Rishi Parajuli, 'the tutor of history', is introduced in the beginning of the novel. Originally from Khaireni Tar he has been living at Kathmandu giving private tutorials to some students. This M.A. passed bachelor has deserted a girl named Radhika and, after persuading her to abort, left her forever few years ago.

The parliament dissolves in the House owing mostly to various corruption charges against minister for Housing and Physical Planning, as small party MPs support the vote

of non confidence tabled by opposition UML Party against the ruling Congress Party. After the announcement of election, political party leaders and workers begin their campaigning at Khaireni Tar. Most of the men are found either participating in this election campaign or eagerly discussing political matters here and there, while most women are enclosed in the house to serve men. The young girls, however, are seen to be enthusiastically going to schools germinating the seed of hope of women's emancipation in this place. Still, women suffer individually too in this patriarchal society physically, mentally, economically and politically.

Binita, who had succumbed innocently to the passion of her teacher Rajesh Dahal and eloped with him defying the male-versed rules of arrange marriage against this conventional society, suffers continuously after sudden death of her husband Rajesh at bus accident. Running a teashop at the bazaar to feed herself, small daughter Tripti and cousin sister Sani, she feels the lack of security always in this place. To lessen it, she has hung the posters of Hindu gods and goddesses on the walls of her teashop which don't let male customers to think of any crime against her in this sanctified surroundings. Sometime ago, the respective patriarch of Dahal clan, Kainlo-kaka has physically abused her adding to her mental suffering too.

The utterly insecure women, Binita Dahal gets security in this place during election period, after her brother-in-law Nayan Raj Dahal, the candidate for the People's Party, comes from Kathmandu to live at this house with Binita's family. She is talked politely or respected by everyone, but only because Nayan Raj, the super hit cinema hero and recent candidate for coming election, is living in the house where she does live. After the arrival of Nayan Raj, Binita has nothing to do, but to serve so many relatives coming

to her tea shop as the family's daughter-in-law. As soon as Nayan leaves this house for party office, she is shown her worth: all the relatives move out of the tea shop following him. The teashop now is left in disorder which she is willingly or unwillingly obliged to manage. Despite her acute frustration for having to go along with such submission betraying herself, she keeps herself polite all morning. To wash piles of dirty dishes containing the spit and saliva of these people, left over rice grains, the green juices of water cress, yellowish mungdal and stains of spice-colored oils has been her regular duty after each meal. Everyone seems to be denying her meager freedoms.

Near 'twined - together bar- peepal' tree which stands at the centre of bazaar, the Muslim bangle seller waits always peacefully for her customers but bargains with no one. She is however, teased by people crying foul. She is completely unimpressed by the political matters including the hubbub after Nayan Raj's arrival. She even disliked the gatherings of men near her stall, where she has to attract lady customers. To add her chagrin, the bazaar is filled with lots of men and only men. The gathering of men around her stall would obstruct the way for lady customers to come to her stall. Thus, the coming election has caused the economic crisis for the bangle seller only due to the constant presence of those men, who look totally unconcerned with such condition of the poor women.

Seeing other parties prepare hard for elections, Kharireni Tar's revenue collector and founding member of People's Party, Jimmawal Sharma decides to find out whether his party is entering the moral battlefields of politics. He is a blind devotee of Lord Krishna, believes in the core teachings of the holy book 'Bhagvad Gita', mutters mantras and dresses in simple cotton to express his avoidance of material pleasure. In reality, he is

extremely money minded, as he joined this party only for the sake of some reward from the party. He also persuades the party to rent his newly constructed house for the office at highest price. Besides, he is one of the most orthodox males in the society. He does not accept food from the hands of any woman except his wife, but he himself is the husband of two wives. This polygamist thinks Binita a whore owing to her widowhood and her exemplary dare to go against the patriarchy by becoming self-dependant, whereas he is proud of himself for his acute devotion to the god, and lives a free life in the society, forgetting his own polygamy, the unpardonable sin from the perspective of women.

Giridhar Adhikari, the chair man of the People's Party's district committee, is another exploiter of women. His obedient and submissive wife Laxmi, who talks only to another woman, is also a victim of male exploitation. To do always the household works or care for her husband, children and others or serve the guests is only her job during each day. She is always abused physically by her drunkard husband, as he was her 'wretched fortune'.

The literacy rate of women in Khaireni Tar is extremely low, as, for instance, Sani, cousin sister of Binita's, is taking 'first ever' adult literacy class to be able only to read few alphabets of Nepali language at the age of eighteen. Dutifully, living in this matriarchal family without any man to protect them, Sani is not secured, but chased by young men everywhere. Despite the dominance of her beauty and perfection over all young girls, she is defamed as an inferior girl in the society by men, after she stands herself firmly against the mistreatment of the ugliest young boy, Harsha Bahadur Khadka.

As the candidacy of Nayan Raj is conformed in Kathmandu from the People's Party for Tanahun district electorate number three, he decides to live in Khairani Tar at his ancestral house, where his sister-in-law Binita runs teashop. Binita knows this fact only through others not from his brother-in-law Nayan. Certainly, the arrival of this candidate will cause many relatives and party members to come in this house. She will have to serve so many people that it looks almost impossible for her to do all the works alone. The only person Binita trusted to approach for help or advice is Thakalni-aama who runs Himal Lodge Restaurant. This grandmother has helped her through her pregnancy and after the time Binita became widow and also encouraged and helped her to stand on her own feet by opening a teashop. Not only Binita, but also other suffering women have got enough help from this old woman. Thakalni aama sends one of her workers, Pramila to help Binita during the stay of Nayan at tea shop.

Day by day, the gatherings of people swell gradually in front of the People's Party's office. One day, some female students come by this office to ask the candidate, if he had any commitment to women. Till then, no party has done anything for women seemingly to perpetuate women's suffering in the society. So, they have come from college campus to inquire whether this candidate sees the women as 'chattel of our fathers -brothers-husbands' as all men do or believes in women's rights and equality. This matter creates only laughter among men around. Most of the party workers are men but only few female voices can be heard. As the election comes near, helped by senior party members, Nayan Raj starts his public rally with the motto "political democracy, economic democracy". He always says to others that 1990 movement only planted the seeds of the democratic revolution and his party is to make democracy spread its roots. The village to

village campaigning of the People's Party's candidate and few members witness the participation of almost men only. Women are busy inside their houses doing household works in these villages, remaining unconcerned with these political affairs.

In this conventional society after the death of husband, woman is allowed to wear only grey window faria or drab clothes and not to marry anyone during the whole span of her life. A window's indulgence in colors would reveal her pleasure and invite criticism and harm. So she chooses to wear such conventional clothes to protect herself from harm. Now, Binita lives with two suffering women, Sani and Pramila, the latter is the mother of for children and has been left by her cruel husband, who went to India to work there and married to another woman. Unwilling, she has been washing dishes at restaurant to survive, enjoying satisfactorily in this miserable condition. Sani attends regularly evening literacy class and talks to these two women, Binita didi and Pramila about what her teacher taught them in the class. The teacher looks trying to impart revolutionary impulses to these illiterate females by telling them few facts about the poor condition of women and suggesting and inspiring them to form mother's group for the development of women as did few women from Dhorphirdi. This teacher also encourages them to organize in order to end the 'palty- arcky' - patriarchy. These women from the evening literacy class, finally, decide to form mother's group. The ascetic's wife and Hom Kumari, the wife of Sub-Inspector or the polygamist's, now head the mother's group – the group of 'blind, deaf, dumb women' - which still lacks educated women like Binita Dahal, who is intermediate passed. Hom Kumari also suffers from her husband, as he, out of her knowledge, suddenly brings the Magar girl home as a second wife. Hom Kumari, showing womanly feelings, easily befriends her and dances with her in the mother's

group that campaigns at the houses of the people to collect money for fund. Binita has no belief that women can form trustful unions, for they can merely act submissively for the representatives of punishing men. This thought is the result of her suffering even from her own mother, who had decided not to take back Binita to home, but to follow the convention as Binita had broken it by eloping. On the other hand, Rishi Parajuli, who have come in Khaireni Tar to join people's party following the suggestion of one member of UML party, i.e., his childhood teacher, suggests Binita to join mother's group, for this group helps mistreated women find the support for each other. This is what she looks like, a women who have been mistreated, she thought.

In the first meeting of a mother's group, women decided at first to repair Akala-mai's shrine with the money collected by dancing in the houses of people for the goddess Akala-mai and singing religious songs. In literacy class, the teacher now begins to bring these women out from old false believes like that of witch-craft and suggests them not only to learn letters, but also to 'think'. This mother's group begins dance programme at each meeting to raise money, though these insecure, unsure, defeated, crushed and bound women are ridiculed by men for their clumsy attempts at freedom.

Towards the end of the novel, election is held enthusiastically, but the candidate from one of the big parties wins using unfair means and the novel ends in the room of Rishi who imagins himself living with Binita. Talking of women, this novel ends with Binita's decision to live with Rishi at Kathmandu breaking traditional patriarchal rules, the successful formation of mother's group that raises the hope for women's development in Khaireni Tar, though Sani still suffers at the end as her compulsory decision to marry

Harsha Bahadur Khadka in order to appease the people spreading fake rumors against her is badly affected by this boy's rejection of her marriage proposal.

This research paper has been divided into four chapters. The first chapter is the general introduction of this dissertation. It introduces the research along with the couple of examples from the text in relation to the issue this paper raises. It also includes the general survey of the novel, concerning the research. In general, it presents a bird's eye view of the entire research.

The second chapter briefly discusses the theoretical modality of this research paper, at first. Then, it shortly explains feminism and its facets along with its ingredients and motives. It also delineates some trends of feminism from liberal feminism to radical one. The modality will revolve around the suffering of women because of their gender as discussed by some feminists. This modality surely does not cover all the facets of feminism and feminist writing, but it surely encompasses those trends that are prominent in Manjushree Thapa's Novel *The Tutor of History*.

Based on the theoretical modality discussed in chapter two, the third chapter analyzes Thapa's novel in relation to the suffering of women living in patriarchal society. It will basically seek to trace the causes behind tremendous suffering of women in the novel.

Finally, the fourth chapter concludes this research paper on the basis of the textual analysis of Manjushree Thapa's novel *The Tutor of History* in chapter three based on the theoretical modality of chapter two. It, indeed, comes to the conclusion as a summary of the explanations and arguments as presented in the preceding chapters that prove

Manjushree's novel to be laden with females' suffering, and traces the hope for women's liberation in the long run.

II: FEMINISTS' DISCOURSE ON FEMALE SUFFERING

Feminism is related to the feminist social movement that seeks equal rights for women; political, social and economic rights equal to those of men. As a movement, it achieved its impetus essentially within the social history of modern women. The women recognized their unequal status in the patriarchal society and banded together to rectify the wrongs done to them. They came out courageously from behind closed doors to speak of their plight. Successfully, they achieved their right to personhood, which had long been denied by these men who had deprived women of personal property, education, entrance into the contracts and suffrage and freedom, as they began to recognize their autonomous self and united together for fighting collectively against all discriminations meted out to the women in patriarchal society. This second chapter gives a short overview of feminism, its facets, feminist criticism and elaborately discusses different feminists' discourse on the female's suffering on which the textual analysis of Manjushree Thapa's novel *The Tutor of History* will be based in the next chapter.

Feminism, as described in *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary*, is “the belief and aim that women should have the same rights and opportunities as men; the struggle to achieve this aim” (466). Feminism is a doctrine that strongly holds a belief in sex equality and severely opposes the sex hierarchy. It presupposes that woman's condition is socially constructed in male-dominated society rather than simply predestined by god or nature. It also posits that women perceive themselves not only as biological sex but a social grouping. Defining feminist consciousness in her own terms, Gerda Learner writes:

I define feminist consciousness as the awareness of women that they belong to a subordinate group; that they have suffered wrongs as a group;

that their condition of subordination is not natural, but is societally determined; that they must join with other women to remedy these wrongs; and finally that they must and can provide an alternative vision of societal organization in which women as well as men will enjoy autonomy and self-determination (14).

Feminist consciousness progressed over time and challenged the practices that perpetuated the notions of superiority of men and inferiority of women. Feminism demands equal rights and opportunities for women in economic, political, psychological, social and individual sense.

Defining feminism, R. Delmer points out the classification of its meaning:

There are those who claim that feminism does have a complex of ideas about women, specific to emanating from feminists ... it is by no means absurd to suggest that you don't have rights to equal treatment, and that not all those supportive of women's demands are feminists. In this light, feminism can claim its own history, its won practices, its own ideas, but feminists can make no claim to an exclusive interest in or copyright over problems affecting women. Feminism can thus be established as a field but can not claim women as its domain (13).

Since class, culture, race and physicality also affect how people are treated, gender is understood by considering cultural practices. Because of the history of male dominance, women especially in western societies have taken notice of and action against the inequality they have historically experienced. Feminism has been used to create

awareness of gender inequality in patriarchal society. It has also been used as a jumping off point in taking action to particularly address equality.

Feminism conjured up different images and ideas concerning the women's issues. In spite of diversity, feminism is often represented as single entity and it advocates for gender equality and freedom. One of the renowned critics of feminism, Bell Hooks adds some critical dimensions to clarify these terms.

To me feminism is not simply a struggle to end male chauvinism as a moment to ensure that women will have equal rights with men, it is a commitment to eradicating the ideology of domination that permeates Western Culture on various levels sex, race and class to name a few and a commitment to reorganizing U.S. society, so that the self development of people can take precedence over imperialism, economic expansion and material desire (194).

Feminism is a perspective that seeks to eliminate the inequalities, oppression and injustices imposed upon women. It is the study of women's position in which women are not characterized in terms of men's needs regarding pleasure, provision and services, but, rather its ideology is that privilege, right, status and obligations should not be determined by gender. It is too a movement which seeks to cross class and race boundaries. To make all these ideas clear, Chris Beasley presents own definition as follows:

Dictionaries usually define it as the advocacy of women's rights based on a belief in the equality of the sexes and in its broadest use the word refers to everyone who is aware of and seeking to end women's subordination.

In aware of and for any reason feminism originates in the perception that there is something wrong with society's treatment of women (27).

Having broader scope and concepts, feminism incorporates different aspects of humanity, despite the fact that it mainly focuses on the issues of women. So, different schools of feminists have yet appeared to present different interpretation of feminism. The bottom-line of feminism, however, started as a movement that challenged all the discriminations which made those women unequal to men. Feminism has been in some way concerned with different theories like Marxist, psychoanalytic and diverse poststructuralist theories. So, feminism represents a phenomenon that is identified with different ideas and is labeled as radical, liberal, existentialist, Marxist, socialist, psychoanalytic, postmodern multicultural and finally ecological. In spite of different and broader meanings of feminism, it can be studied on the basis of three different schools of feminism.

British school of feminism is related to Marxist and social feminism. Social and Marxist feminists associate gender inequality and women's oppression with capitalist system of production and division of labor. The prominent reason behind gender inequality was found by the feminist thinkers in unequal distribution of capital. Raising the issues of limited employment of women in income-generating sectors, the underpayment of women and physical harassment of female workers by male workers at factories, Marxist feminists reach at the point of defining women's position in terms of socio-economic basis. They take women as proletariat and men as bourgeois in order to propose to wage a war against that unequal distribution and, thus, to disrupt the socio-economic structure. In this way, economic hierarchy would be dismantled.

Social feminists are to bring together the knowledge of oppression under capitalism and of oppression under hierarchy into unified explanation of all forms of social oppression. It, thus, describes unified system as “capitalist patriarchy”. On the other hand, capitalism depends basically on the production of women who has to work as housewives and mothers and women’s working as consumers of goods and their services for the household become main source of capitalists’ profit-making. Rosalind Coward, Mary Jacobs, Cora Kaplan, Michele Barrette and Juliet Mitchell are few among British feminists who have combined ideology of literature and Marxist theoretical interest in the production with feminist concerns for women’s writing.

French feminism is concerned with Sigmund Freud’s psychoanalysis that centered on the issue of human neurosis. Freud brings gender issue in the center, as he talks about the formation of women’s unconscious. He seems to have discovered the fundamental differences in dream images seen by men and women and takes women’s dream as erotic and men’s as egoist and ambitious. For the French feminists, Freud’s analysis is utterly gender-biased. They see the patriarchal oppression of women founded on the type of negative constructions associated with Freud’s theory of female physicality.

Though Jacques Lacan, French psychoanalyst, opposed Freudian concern of repressed desire and drive to physicality in human unconscious, his assumption that femininity can only be seen from the point of view of male-centered culture has been questioned by French feminists. Indeed, French school of feminism concerns itself with philosophic and psychoanalytic issues relating to women and language seeking writing peculiar to women. It believes that femininity offers a possible procedure for marginalizing and subverting mechanisms of power, thereby breaking it up.

The three prominent French feminists: Helene Cixous, Irigaray and Julia Kristeva challenged the world view of patriarch structures, believed that Western thought was based on systematic repression of women's experience and tried to deconstruct philosophy, psychoanalysis, language, culture and social practices. They claim that not only culture and religion, but also language itself supported patriarchal domination.

American school of feminism is also called socio-historic feminism due mainly to its analysis of text as historical process whether it is emotional, political, social or psychological. It seeks to raise female consciousness through the help of literature. The American feminists keep their effort up by using the language in the process of close reading and replacing it with their own language.

Modern feminist writings in the United States, however, took their stimulus basically from various protest movements. Men enjoy the power that controls women. Feminists believe that men have historically dominated women and suppressed them to express their identity and role in the society. Females have been compelled to remain merely in the private sphere. American models of feminists seek for historical and social position of female writers. The prominent feminists of American school of criticism are Elaine Showalter, Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar etc. Feminism has been diversified towards several facets: liberal, radical, black, individualist, lesbian, post-colonial, gender and third-world.

Liberal feminists include those who advocate for equal rights for women within the framework of the liberal state. Radical feminism offers a real challenge to and rejection of the liberal orientation towards the public world of men. It keeps women in primary concern. Radical feminists' goal is to gain total control over their own bodies

and celebrate them. Elaine Showalter is the precursor of this radical feminism.

Individualist feminists focus on the quest for individual of personal independence.

Despite tremendous diversity of feminism, it is basically concerned with gender equality and freedom of women from all the exploitations or suffering caused by men.

Feminist criticism is the outcome of ‘women’s movement’ of 1960s. It puts emphasis on different kind of reading to literature breaking the traditional monolithic way of examining literature from feminist’s perspective. The task of feminist criticism is to focus its concern on women’s access to language in the lexical range from which words can be chosen on the ideological and cultural determinants of expression. Feminist literary criticism is related to the movement of political feminists for economic, cultural and social freedom and equality, as it was the product of two-century-old struggles for women’s right. Defining feminist criticism in broader sense, Toril Moi says, “feminist criticism then is specific kind of political discourse, a critical and theoretical practice, committed to the struggle against patriarchy and ..., not simply a concern for gender in literature” (204).

Feminist criticism questions the male-centered ideologies, attitudes and male interpretation in literature and criticism to attack the male notions of values in literature and criticism. To subvert the patriarchal system and the culture of centuries, it offers critiques of male authors and representations of men in literature, and privileges of women writers too.

During 1970s, feminist criticism tended to expose ‘mechanisms of patriarchy’, i.e., the cultural mind-set in men and women which perpetuated inequality between men and women. More attention was critically given to those texts, written by men, in which

typical and influential images of females were constructed. Remarkably, the mood in feminist critics in 1980s was changed drastically which is marked in *Theory for Beginners: An Introduction to Literary Theory and Its Application* in detail. It reads:

Firstly, feminist criticism [in 1980s] became much more eclectic, meaning that it began to draw upon the findings and approaches of other kinds of criticism...Secondly, it switched its focus from attacking male versions of the world to exploring the nature of the word and outlook, and reconstructing the lost and suppressed records of female experience. Thirdly, attention was switched to the need to construct a new canon of women's writing by rewriting the history of the novel and of poetry in such a way that neglected women writers were given new prominence (151).

Shifts in mood, interest and activity seem characteristic in feminist criticism. One of the prominent feminist critics, Elaine Showalter has described this change of ,especially, late 1970s as a shift of attention among feminist critics from 'andro-texts' or the texts written by men to 'gynotexts', those written by women. She also coined the feminist term 'gynocritics' which meant the study of gynotexts, but in broader and varied sense. According to her:

Gynocritics is related to feminist research in history, anthropology, psychology, and sociology, all of which have developed hypotheses of a female subculture including not only the ascribed status, and the internalized constructs of femininity, but also the occupations, interactions, and consciousness on women (1227).

Showalter also categorized the history of women's writing into three phases: feminine phase (1840-1880), in which female writers blindly followed dominant male artistic norms and aesthetic standards; feminist phase (1880-1920), in which radical and often separatist positions were taken; and finally female phase (1920 onward) that concentrated only upon female writing and female experience.

In short, feminist critics, first, rethink the literary cannon to rediscover the texts written by women. Secondly, they revalue women's experience, as well as they examine and challenge representations of women as 'others', 'lack' or 'part of nature' in literature. They also recognize the role of language in making what is constructed and social, questions the notions of difference between men and women, search for female language and reread psychoanalysis to explore the issue of male and female identity.

From the time eternal, women have been being regarded as inferior and men as superior being. With the start of civilization, the representatives of the patriarchal societies began to dominate and make women suffer culturally, socially, politically and sometimes mythologically too. Women were considered to be physically weak and mentally or intellectually inferior or incapable of thinking or reasoning. Here, feminists are to eliminate all the discriminations and dominations made on the basis of 'gender', class, race and religion.

In ancient myths of every religion, women are found in poor condition, suffering hard after being subjected and mistreated by men. Two greatest epics of Hindu mythology, 'Ramayana' and 'Mahabharata' have enough instances of women's suffering because of their gender. Sita's chastity is doubted and questioned by men including her devoted husband Ram too and she has to let herself be swallowed by mother earth in

order to prove her chastity in 'Ramayana' and Draupati has no any choice but to marry five men willy-nilly and, later on, she is mercilessly sold as cattle by her husbands to other men even without seeking her permission in another epic 'Mahabharata'.

The traditional men of patriarchal society attribute the qualities to the women as per the situation that benefits these men. There stands Madonna, the virgin who inspired piety through her beauty and tenderness, Muses of arts or patron goddesses of poets, and Dante's Beatrice, the pure and innocent virgin on the one side as an idealized projections of men's desires. On the other side, demonic projections of men's physical resentment and terror are found in Eve, first Original Sinner and source of evil, Pandora, another source of all evils, who opened a jar containing all kinds of misery and evil, which escaped and flew out over the earth, and few destructive sensual temptresses like Delilah, attractive, but treacherous woman, and Circe, malign witch, castrating mother and terrible sorceress, who, by means of drugs and incantations, turned innocent men into lions, wolves, or swines.

In male-dominated society, it is generally accepted and internalized trend that those females, who try to revolt against male authority, seek equal rights for themselves, defy male-versed rules and regulations and advocate for freedom and individuality, are taken to be insincere and monstrous. Circe, Delilah, Medusa and Scylla are only few examples of monstrous women from myths, who did nothing but defended themselves by confronting dauntlessly the power of male authority. Talking of Medusa, *Britannica: Ready Reference Encyclopedia* writes:

[Medusa is] the most famous of the monsters known as Gorgons. Anyone who looked at Medusa turned to stone. She was the only Gorgon who was mortal. The hero Perseus, looking only at her reflection in a shield given to him by Athena, killed her by cutting off her head. Perseus later gave the severed head to Athena, who placed it in her shield; according to another account, he buried it in the market place of Argos.(Vol.7,217)

The first great feminist work and one of the trailblazing works of feminism is *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792) written by Mary Wollstonecraft, which calls for women and men to be educated equally. Wollstonecraft is an English writer, devout feminist and especially advocate of social and educational equality for women. This book concentrates upon poor condition of suffering women caused by male-versed or biased educational system, which, instead of enabling girls/women, makes their status degrade. It argues that such educational system of Mary's time deliberately trained women to be frivolous and incapable. Mary proposes for radical reform of national educational system to upgrade women's status in society. She argues that in an educational system that provides same advantages to girls and boys, women/girls would prove themselves to be exceptional wives and mothers as well as capable workers in many professions.

In this book, Mary Wollstonecraft goes beyond her Dissenter friends, because they had their views strictly patriarchal. She creates here some fundamental feminist principles to be accepted and adopted by later feminists. According to her, mind does not distinguish whether someone is male or female. On the other hand, the society can not attain harmony, peace, prosperity and progress, if it keeps on retaining women in the role of convenient domestic slaves and alluring mistresses, denying their economic

independence and encourages them to be docile and attentive only to their looks to the exclusion of all else.

Mary discusses the pernicious impact of sentimental novels on the lives of women in eighteenth century. Whatever women see or hear in sentimental novel serves to fix bad impressions. Due to the traditional educational system, women are compelled to study such novels which are not intellectual, but sentimental. Because of the impact these novels have upon the woman, these women cannot exercise intellectuality but are trapped in the 'Sentimentality' and become emotional rather than rational being.

Wollstonecraft opines that from the very beginning girls' learning has been being mere repetition of the conventional ideas promulgated by the representatives of patriarchal societies. In sentimental novels, she writes, a boy is depicted as an active person whereas girl is presented as passive beauty. Such novels create ideal pictures of man and women. According to her, man holds public and private space, but woman holds only private space, being deprived of public one.

Giving emphasis upon women's reasoning in order to see them free from all discriminations in patriarchal society, Mary remarks, "it is the right use of reason along which makes us independent of everything-excepting the unclouded Reason-'whose service is perfect freedom'".(398)

Germaine Necker de Stael is another remarkable writer who conveys a strong concern with the situation of women dominated by men. She talks of women's suffering due to uncertainty of their place in society and men's cruel treatment. Everything, she says, in their success and failure is arbitrary and they are neither in the world of nature nor in the world of society. Women are strictly restricted by men to exercise their

intellect. Intellectual men often astonish at women being as capable as they are. Defining the mistreatment meted out to woman, Stael writes:

Yet since the revolution men had thought it politically and morally useful to reduce woman to the most absurd mediocrity. They have addressed women only in wretched language as devoid of refinement as of wit. Women have had no incentive to develop their minds ... As soon as a woman is marked as distinguished person, the public in general is prejudiced against her. (451)

One of the twentieth century critics, Rosemarie Garland Thomson goes to the extent that she sees similarity between disabled body and female body. She finds many parallels between social meanings attributed to female body and those assigned to disabled body. According to her, both are taken to be deviant or inferior, excluded from the participation in public and economic life, and put against the norm which is assumed to possess the natural physical superiority.

Many examples are abound that show the equation of femaleness with disability from Freud's definition of femaleness in terms of castration or late-nineteenth-century physicians' taking menstruation as disabling and restricting 'eternal wound' to Thorstein Veblen's describing women as literally disabled by feminine costumes and roles. At present time, many feminists invoke some negative images of disability to describe oppression of women or women's suffering.

She attacks at Aristotle's discourse on normal and abnormal. In the fourth book of *Generation of Animals*, Aristotle asserts that anyone who does not take after his parents is in a way monstrosity, for in such a case, Nature strays from 'generic type and the

deviation began with the formation of female instead of male. Thus, Aristotle produces 'generic type' along with its antithesis, the 'monstrosity', whose departure from such a type is deviation. He places generic type at the center of his system and leaves monstrosity on the outer margin. He conjoins the monstrosity and female outside definitive norm. He further says that females are nothing more than deformed male or 'mutilated' male. Thomson argues that by conflating disability and femaleness and most significantly by putting generic type on the one side and monstrosity and female or all physical variation as different, derivative, inferior and insufficient on the other, he wants to create somatic diversity into a hierarchy of value that assigns completeness or superiority to some bodies or males from female's perspective and deficiency and inferiority to others or females, disabled etc. In this way, the female inferiority is defined by males in order only to assume themselves superior to the females and then to dominate and suppress them which in turn causes females suffer incessantly. Thus, Thomson writes "If the male gaze makes the normative female a ...spectacle, then the stare is the gaze intensified, framing her body as an icon of deviance. Indeed ...the stare is the gesture that creates disability as an oppressive social relationship" (26).She further writes that femininity and disability were/are inextricably entangled in patriarchal culture with an example of Aristotle's equation of women with disabled men. The female body has been labeled as deviant and historically also the practices of femininity configured female bodies similarly to disability. For instance, scarification, foot binding, clitoridectomy and corseting are still socially accepted and encouraged. In the same way, "such conditions as anorexia, hysteria, and agoraphobia are in a sense standard feminine roles enlarged to disabling conditions". (27)

Thus, even ideal female body is abnormal in comparison to universal standard of the male body. The beautiful woman's figure stands in as opposition to the ideal male. Then, if he is to be active, large, strong and hard, she must be passive, weak, soft and small. 'Normative female body' is, in this way, the negative term opposing the male body. The norms of feminine beauty often obscure the categories of "normal" and "pathological", Thomson states. Nineteenth-century Euro-American prescription for upper class feminine beauty- emanated body, pale skin, wide eyes- precisely paralleled the symptoms of tuberculosis and extreme thinness promoted by today's fashion industries mimics the appearance of disease. These examples show how female's normal body is taken as or made unnatural and abnormal. The cultural practices that women are compelled to do, like clitorodectomies and scarification, involve mutilation and unbearable pain, which is ignored by oppressive patriarchal society.

Discussing Greek tragedies, Camille Paglia, another feminist, says that female tragic protagonists are rare in these books, as tragedy is only a male paradigm of rise and fall. Tragic woman is presented less moral than man and woman introduces untransformed cruelty into the tragedy, only because she is herself a problem that this genre tries to correct. Indeed, tragedy tests and purifies male's will as well as plays male game only. This inhospitability of tragedy to woman is to correspond with the fact that all the genres of science, philosophy, athletics, high art and politics were created by traditional men.

Women's monthly cycle was once called 'the curse' with reference to the expulsion from the Garden, when woman was condemned to labor pain due to Eve's sin. Many cultures hemmed in menstruating women by ritual taboos adding to women's

suffering. Even today, woman, at the time of monthly cycle, is thought to be untouchable in many cultures. For Paglia, this is not the result of so-called 'original sin', but a natural process. Women have been most victimized by one more political oppression, the 'fashion's ever-turning wheel', binding their limbs to phantom commands. The beautiful women are always scrutinized and harassed by men every where, she grieves. Invoking restrictions that women had to suffer, Paglia writes, "Women played no part in Athenian high culture. They could not vote, attend the theater, or walk in the stoa talking Philosophy". (100)

Paglia reminds us of the Church father's cruelty against and mistreatment to the females. They perceived the Greek Mother as the enemy of Christ. St. Augustine called the rites of Cybele shameful and filthy. For him, the Great Mother did surpass all her sons not in greatness of deity, but of crime. Cybele, the monster, imposes the 'deformity of cruelty' on her castrated priests. Even Jupiter sinned less for them, where as the Great Mother was supposed, like Rome herself, to be the whore of Babylon. But, Paglia prides on saying that "banished by Augustine, the Great Mother disappears for over a thousand years...returns in all her glory in Romanticism, that historical wave of the archetypal".(138)

Virginia Woolf, a renowned critic addresses the status of women in her long essay *A Room of One's Own*. Woolf's feministic concern was deeper, as she transgressed the then feminists' emphasis only on obtaining the vote, to discuss herself the men's anger at women and above all the psychological conditions under which men and particularly women were brought up. She states that due to the lack of material resources-money, time, breadth of human experiences, women, in the Shakespearean era, could not exercise

intellect. A woman would also have been discouraged by everyone in the process. She imagined the utopian society in which men and women would come together in desire and purpose. She remarks, “Men are the ‘opposing faction’; men are hated and feared, because they have the power to bar her way to what she wants to do”.(818)

French writer and feminist, Simone de Beauvoir proposes a scholarly and passionate plea for the abolition of what she called the myth of the “eternal feminine” in her treatise *The Second Sex* (1949); the book became the classic of feminist literature. This book offers biological, historical and psychological perspectives on women and consideration of prevailing patriarchal myths about them. Beauvoir also attacks the patriarchal myths of women that presume the false female essence. According to her, the myth of woman’s mysterious otherness has justified numerous abuses against women.

Patriarchal myths collectively render women to the flesh and she is doomed to immanence. She is to hold passivity for peace and harmony, for, if she declines this role, she is taken to be an ogress. She appears as privileged other or man’s counterbalance, his adventure, his happiness and his salvation. To set ‘One’ on the top, men define ‘Other’, as ‘One’ thinks of himself as transcendent; he soars in the sky of heroes and women remains on the earth, beneath his feet. The patriarchal society which claims women home and hearth defines her as sentiment, immanence and inwardness in accordance to its need to dominate and enclose women within the house. She further says:

This is the lot assigned to woman in the patriarchate; but it is in no way a vocation any more than slavery is vocation of the slave....To identify Woman with Altruism is to guarantee to man absolute rights in her devotion, it is to impose on women a categorical imperative.(997)

Beauvoir remarks that there are some myths that benefit the ruling caste in patriarchal society by justifying all privileges and authorizing their abuses. The most advantageous myth is that of feminine mystery which permits men to explain easily anything as mystery that appears inexplicable including woman. Simone claims that men are condemned to be ignorant of the quality of women's physical pleasure, pains of childbirth and the discomfort at the time of monthly cycle's three or four days. Pointing at some privileges man occupies in the patriarchal society, she writes:

...he is in a position to show his love actively; very often he supports the woman or at least helps her; in marrying her he gives her social standing; he makes her presents; his independent economic and social position allows him to take the initiative and think up contrivances (998).

The feminine mystery, she argues, is created by men only to place themselves on the Master side and that Mystery belongs to the slave, as though woman does not always understand man, there is no such thing as masculine mystery. Through the myths, the patriarchal society wanted to impose its laws and customs upon the individuals effectively and allow men to suppress women.

Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar argue in *The Madwoman in the Attic* (1974) that from the past to the present the writers' creativity has been identified utterly with men only. On the other hand, women had to struggle hard against the effects of socialization, i.e., the struggle against men's oppressive reading of women. This creates anxiety in women's mind with the result that they suffer from variety of mental and physical illnesses, including agoraphobia, anorexia and claustrophobia. They states that major images the patriarchal literary tradition offered women are vexing and vexed

polarities of sweet dumb Snow White and fierce mad Queen and angel and monster. For traditional men, she opines, women exist only to be acted on by men, both as literary and sensual objects in this world. Being defenseless, women have historically been in patriarchal societies reduced to mere properties, images and characters imprisoned in male texts. She furthers her statements that: “From Eve, Minerva, Sophia, and Galatea onward, after all, patriarchal mythology defines women as created by, from, and for men, the children of male brains, ribs, and ingenuity”.(12)

From the eighteenth century on, conduct books for ladies have prescribed submissiveness, modesty, selflessness reminding them that they should be angelic. Eternal feminine virtues of purity, delicacy, gracefulness, modesty, compliancy, civility, chastity, affability, reticence and politeness, all, as modes of mannerliness, contributed to angelic innocence. These conduct books written by men thus tried to make women dutiful to their husbands. For Gilbert and Gubar, these angelic qualities make woman live a life of death or a death-in-life. On the other hand, assertiveness and aggressiveness, assumed to be male’s characteristics, are thought monstrous in women, only because they are unfeminine. The books argued that it was highly reasonable that women should be diligent and careful to please and content men and the arts of pleasing men were the proper acts of a lady. On this way, men wanted women to be utterly passive and submissive to them and suffer all mistreatments from men.

In the world of globalization, as Raj Mohini Sethi argues, one must be sensitive to women’s needs and conditions. Though women comprise about half the world’s population, they still have been on the margin, but need to be put at the center of development theory and practice. They are deprived of lots of opportunities and

imprisoned within the household. Because of the lack of education, opportunities and skills, the access of women to interesting and creative jobs gets restricted. Further arguing women's suffering in patriarchal society, she remarks that "social relationships within households and society are guided by the overarching ideology of patriarchy at all levels of social existence. This perpetuates the world of suffering and shared servitude for women" (14). She further writes that patriarchal society even in this age of economic development is to cause the vulnerabilities, the sufferings and oppression of women. Not only patriarchy but also the capitalism since early times has helped in the subjugation of women and inflamed violence against women. On the other hand, poor women suffer from double disadvantage as that of belonging to the under-privileged class and that of the 'under-privileged gender'.

For Uma Shankar Jha, most educational systems play the role in the production of disparities which exist within the society. She also poses the question of the position of women in the patriarchal society. Man's role in the occupational structure is the major one in the maintenance of the household. Man provides economic support to the house, where as woman has to maintain household works.

She writes that nineteenth century women were granted education only when its method of teaching and subject matter were not regarded as threatening to the existing power relations within the policies. She puts forward her idea about Eastern educational system that:

In fact, quite often, basic literacy skills and other accoutrements were seen as essential for the daughters and wives of the recipients of Western Education. Today, what girls should be taught and the levels to which they

can be educated remain a matter of concern among policy makers as well as middle class families. (238)

She says that societal ideology based on male superiority in decision-making and control affects also the self-perceptions of women as well as conditions familial views on the feminine role. According to another feminist writer Afsaneh Najmabadi, the hierarchy is created among boys and girls by the books designed for education of young children. The books teach and give certain characteristics to the boys and girls, putting a girl next to a boy. She writes:

This pattern of moral construction continues throughout the book.

Desirable moral traits for boys include being content with life, generosity, not being prone to anger and cruelty, knowing one's ministers, being God-fearing and charitable, honesty, and pursuit of sciences and education. For girls, they include tidiness, being obedient to one's mother, not hiding anything from one's parents, lack of arrogance, hard work, and learning womanly crafts". (98)

The way women are treated and psychological complexities inherent in them are basically concerned with the cultural systems existing in the society. Women's condition and development are determined by the cultural forces, as the cultural theory includes not only race, class, history and nationality but also gender as significant literary determinant.

The above discussed issues raised in the theoretical books of noted feminist critics and writers have propagated enough arguments and ideas to clarify the causes behind women's suffering and justify the women's united revolt against patriarchal society in Manjushree Thapa's novel *The Tutor of History*. They have also created certain

perspectives to observe, scrutinize and analyze the novel meticulously and scrupulously and to understand the writer's feministic intention in her book.

III. DEPICTION OF WOMEN'S SUFFERING IN NEPAL

The Tutor of History and Feministic Approach

Politics looks apparently to be the main concern of *The Tutor of History*. Gender-based discrimination and exploitation against women is shown prevailing in patriarchal society throughout the novel. Every where, we encounter the irrecoverably victimized women living the life of suppression and subjugation. From violated Binita Dahal to defamed Madhu or from oppressed Laxmi to deserted Radhika, every woman suffers in this or that way because of their gender. This tradition-bound society still holding the notions of superiority of men and inferiority of women makes these women vulnerable to all kinds of exploitation and crime committed by men. Due to the lack of education, almost utter exclusion from politics or decision-making and economic and social dependence upon men, women are easily marginalized and discriminated by the representatives of the patriarchal society. Manjushree Thapa through this novel wants to raise some issues of women in the context of Nepal by creating the life-like portrait of the plight of village women who are thus in an extreme need of emancipation; freedom from suffering.

Basically set in the roadside town of Khairani Tar in Tanahun district, western part of Nepal, *The Tutor of History* is the story of political campaign for parliamentary elections in reference to the period during 1990s in the country after the restoration of democracy; the period that witnessed the political turmoil as a result of frequently held elections, time after time formation of Government and its failure and many more, political campaigns. After small parties' MPs support the vote of non-confidence tabled by opposition UML party against the ruling congress party, the parliament dissolves in

the House due mainly to various corruption charges against minister for Housing and Physical Planning. As election becomes inevitable for parliament, political campaigning begins at Khaireni Tar with party leaders and workers actively marching from one place to another to gain votes for particular party in order, anyhow, to win the election or, at least, here, electorate number three of Tanahun district. These parties make several plans and seek to apply many strategies to make their candidates win the seat for parliament or to cut the votes of opposing parties.

Rishi Parajuli, who lives in Kathmandu for twelve years giving private tutorials to some students in history, decides to go to Khaireni Tar, his birthplace, following the strategies suggested by communist party members; a political game to cut or divert the votes of one party to another, so that third party automatically wins the election. Though the conformation of People's Party to make Nayan Raj, the super star or the one-time number one cinema hero, a candidate of Tanahun district electorate number three disappoints Giridhar Adhikari, an alcoholic chairperson of the People's Party's district committee, who had the prospect of being selected as the candidate by the party for electorate number three in Tanahun, Giridhar is persuaded by his close friend Om Gurung, a large-hearted former British Gurkha, to participate in their party's village to village campaigning and help their candidate Nayan Raj by providing him with all the details of villages and some strategies.

Nearer the election day comes, more and more men participate in election campaign or discuss mostly the political matters here and there. Like other parties, this People's Party also has some strategies for the election; to recruit some workers or volunteers and educate them about the principles of the party, after mass rallies which

would attract more workers, later to recruit workers from each village, to share party's vision to every worker, as they represented the party in the same way and were party's ambassadors to the people, to have several publicity groups, which will travel the electorate, publicizing People's Party's ballot symbol 'teacup', putting up posters and painting slogans in every village, to form two groups, traveling from village to village campaigning, recruiting men, to form booth committees, and finally, beginning two weeks before election date, to finalize their strategies in each booth and decide which booths to be focused on and where to give up. That's how the strategies would be conducted, according to the candidate Nayan Raj, who was living in Kathmandu with his wife and children, but came here for election to live in his ancestral house. But, his celluloid background and syrupy speeches addressed to the people could not be enough in the election to fight with the large political parties that apply strategies of all sorts, whether fair or unfair, to reach the goal.

Finally one of the big parties claims its win in this Tanahun district electorate number three, as the result comes at, and everything becomes normal as before. During election campaigns before the day election was to be held, the degeneration of politics becomes apparent in the novel. Indeed, the presentation of extreme voracity of political parties, politics based on cash and conspiracy, election campaign held with cheapening of politics, large political parties ruined by the avaricious nature and lacking strong dedication to public welfare goes hand in hand with the common people joining party not to support the political party's ideology, but for personal gain. The story covers the whole span of election from dissolving of parliament to the result of voting. Everyone looks to be engaging eagerly in politics in some way throughout political campaigns in Khaireni

Tar in such a way that it seems as if politics has become crucial part of them or the cultural phenomena. This is not only the thing the novel seeks to capture or convey, but the women's suffering emerges prominently time and again in the novel. The miserable condition of women of Khairani Tar is extremely appealing to the readers, as it represents the real plight of village women throughout the country.

Though women comprise more than half the population of Nepal, they stay far behind than men in all the aspects of life. There lies wide gender gap in the economic, social, administrative, legal and political fields due basically to the existence of patriarchal social systems which restrict women to come out from the confinement of household and lades men with the control of all resources. This creates inequality between men and women and helps women's status degrade more and more. Nepalese people traditionally prefer sons over daughters with some cultural reasons to be looked at. A son guarantees that family line will continue and his parents will have blissful path to the heaven after their death. According to religious tradition, when the parents die, it is their sons who are to perform different rituals to ensure their parents' place in the heaven. Thus, the daughters become unwelcome to the society and won becomes important, as the parents find salvation through their son. This concept of son-ship is also related to the culture of 'Pinda-dan'; Pindas to be offered to the deceased by the son. Therefore, in many families, a mother should continue giving birth to the children until a son, the representative of the clan, is born. Daughter is considered as a great burden to the family, for she has to leave her father's home after marriage and live at the house of husband forever. After birth, she is thought of as a property of someone else, to whom she will be one day married, that's why, most of the poor families do not spend much to improve the

health nutrition and educational status of a daughter, but relegate her to the role of house worker, as she will have no more options than to do the household works in the house of her husband. Even though the constitution of the then kingdom of Nepal-1990 had guaranteed women all equal rights, a big chunk of the population, these women continue to be ignored by both the society and the state.

Exclusion of women from development activities and all the sectors remains as the major reason behind tardy economic growth and social unrest. Progress can not be gained in the country where the majority of population are kept away from the stream of development. This instigates only violence and social turmoil throughout the country. So, the development of country is possible only after all its citizens are provided equal rights. Demonstrating the miserable plight of girls/women in Nepal Sajal Bhattarai in *Gender Studies* writes:

The girls' percentage in primary school was only 41.6% in 1997. The enrolment rates for the girls in the lower secondary level were 38.6% and 37.7% in the secondary level. The present national literacy rate is 48% which is the lowest rate in South Asia and there is wide gap between female (30%) and male (66%) literacy rate. The enrollment of women in higher education is only 26%. (320)

In this way, we can see how far backward women stand in terms of educational opportunities. Women's economic backwardness is presented by Sajal in these lines:

According to 1991 census, women comprised 40.38% of economically active population and 90.5% of them are engaged in agriculture. In 1971, the female labor force in agriculture was found to be 30.4%. In 1991, it

increased to 45% and in 1996/97 study, almost 2/3rd of the agriculture labor force comprised of women.... (335)

In the same way, women are far behind in politics or the sector of decision making. To enhance women's participation in politics, the 1990 constitution of Nepal stated that at least 5% of the total number of candidates from any political party running an election must be women and, out of thirty five members elected in the National Assembly by the House of the representatives, at least, three members must be women. The number of women enrolled in political parties, however, is very much low and the proportion of women in the governing bodies of Nepali national parties has never exceeded ten percent. This makes it apparent that women are deprived of equal positions in government; the power to control.

In spite of number of movements of feminism in Nepal, women's status has not yet been improved except that of those few women who are rich and have access to politics. Relating to this fact, Sera Tamang says:

If we study the names of women, who speak in national and international conferences, who write in papers and magazine, we may find the names of those women who have descended from higher classed....After the fall of Panchayat, Nepal has seen very few changes in the caste, class, and indigenous formation of the women in leadership, which we easily come to know if we read the name of the participators of conferences.

Comparatively, only a certain number of women...are able to achieve the opportunities of profession because of their accessibility in politics and power. (548)

We can see that the condition of women in Nepal is miserably poor, so much so that only few countable women could have upgraded their status in the society, but are still backward in comparison to men. This ineradicable fact is impossible to ignore, as they, especially village women, have continuously been suffering from men in different ways in the patriarchal society; economically, socially and politically.

One of the representatives of Nepali writing in English, Manjushree Thapa has well demonstrated pitiable plight of the suffering women of Nepal in her debut novel *The Tutor of History*. This novel actually covers almost all the women of Khairani Tar from different planes of life, but places them equal; concerning their plight, as everyone of them suffers because of the similarity of gender. The traditional society of Khairani Tar still holds the ancient male-versed notions about women, who are thought to be submissive, emotional, irrational, dependent and server to the family and instigate, thus, men to dominate and exploit women. In this way, women suffer continuously throughout their life in this patriarchal society.

One of the female characters of this novel, who suffers in this traditional society, is Laxmi who is utterly dependent to her husband, Giridhar, who never cares about the household problems. On the other hand, she becomes busy all the time in her household works, maintains home and frees Giridhar to political gossips or drinking parties. She has no any task in life except to serve the family and guests well and dedicate herself to her exploiting husband, Giridhar, the chairman of People's Party's district committee. As a response to the guests' offer, "she just slipped in to the house like a servant following orders" (38) and she talked always only with other woman.

Patient, humanitarian, misanthropic, loving and highly intelligent woman, Asha is another house wife married some years ago to Om, former British Gurkha. “In flesh she had proved to be engagingly complex, and after decades of living side by side Om still marveled at her”(25). Asha always counseled him that they focus their energy on the betterment of town. She gives wise suggestions always to her husband, as she requests him not to be too much emotional towards self-caused plight of his best friend, Giridhar Adhikari. She claims logically politics to be ‘useless thing’, has sheer control over her own passions, like anger, sympathizes Giridhar soothingly, makes Om be aware of his excessive help and unnecessary care for Giridhar which later on proves to be like pouring water onto sand, and most importantly rears and cares her ‘mita-son’- son of a friend- like a mother perfectly. “Meal by meal his ‘mita-mother’ offered him affection. Meal by meal he suckled at her love, and he grew strong” (255). In the meantime, she suggests Om that the boy should be taken to the doctor and, after the boy turns from extremely feeble lad to the strong and handsome man, she persuades Om to assign some small tasks to the boy at his office, so that he would be exposed to the people. This exposure to the men will help this boy develop his self-confidence.

Despite Asha’s motherly devotion to feed and enable Khadka boy to change from the ugliest and most feeble boy in the society and mad follower after Sani, the most beautiful girl on demand, who despises him, to the handsome, strong and self-dependent man, who, as one of the representatives of the patriarchal society, cruelly rejects Sani’s trapped offer for marriage. As he comes to the strength through the help of a woman, after he is ejected from the house by his father, a man, he becomes dominant over another woman, Sani, by ignoring her. He mutters himself that he is far greater than Sani, for he

has gone to the school for several years, whereas Sani still knows nothing more than few alphabets as a result of her attendance at adult literacy class for few days. In this way, we can see that woman is regarded no more than the server to man and far inferior to him in patriarchal society.

Om, though himself the most kind-hearted and helpful man in the society, is another patriarch who, while talking about Asha to his best friend Giridhar, says, “She talks too much, my woman. Like a child – hardly knows what she is saying. I tell her; something you don’t know, you must accept this fact”(28), though he knows that she always remains right to the point and sometimes feels that it’s all luck which offered him the house, his family and most importantly the wife like Asha.

Thus, it becomes apparent that in the society that is still perpetuating the conventional values and ideas concerning women, every man comes under the partial roof of patriarchal social systems to dominate, exploit and finally cause suffering to the woman. Woman’s wisdom is either ignored or frowned at with surprise. Woman gains the place of no-more-than-an-object or playing thing and suffers from man’s exploitation with nobody to share her feelings and miseries.

Radhika, slightly discussed character in the novel, is one of the exploited female characters suffering hard in life. First, she is exploited physically by Rishi Parajuli, who must have promised her to marry soon. In pretense that he could not find a job to sustain both of them and their child after marriage, he persuades her to abort, as, may be, according to him, it was only option they could afford. He, then, convinces her not to mention it ever and disappears from her life without telling the reason. In this way, Rishi, at first, enjoys his passion by making Radhika pregnant and leaves her forever to suffer

alone in this world. He is the great exploiter of woman who are thought to be mere a playing object, not a human being. Neither the feelings nor the future of is considered by this man, the true patriarch and Radhika, a destroyed girl is thrown into the crowd to suffer alone.

Pramila is another woman left alone in the world by a man to suffer on patriarchal society. Extrovert and helpful, Pramila is an ideal woman who is made the mother of several children and abandoned by her husband who goes to India to work there as a guard and settles there with another wife leaving Pramila alone here to sustain herself and the children by washing dishes at Himal Lodge Restaurant. She is compelled to live meaningless life doing hard work at restaurant, after she is deceived by her own husband. She is to suffer throughout her life, as it is certain that her husband will never come back to home, for he has married to another woman there. She becomes the victim of the rules and regulations of patriarchal society which allows a man to marry several women, but restricts woman from re-marrying any man, even after the death of her husband. On the one hand, Binita Dahal, young widow, has to live alone without husband, while, on the other, Jimmawal Sharma, still enjoys the life with two wives without any objection from the people. This greedy old man has married two women and become the father of many children with whom he is living happy life in the society.

Blind devotee of Lord Krishna, Jimmawal Sharma believes in the core teachings of the holy book 'Bhagvad Gita', mutters mantras and wears simple cotton clothes to express his avoidance of material pleasure. This is his outward reality. Inside him, there lies the spirit of the patriarch. He does not accept any food from a woman except his wife, for he doubts that offering woman might have defied the rules of separation

assigned for the ladies, i.e., not to touch any man or food to be eaten by men during three days' period of monthly cycle. Besides, Mr. Sharma is the husband of two wives, but holds certain respectable status as the founder member of People's Party and Khaireni Tar's revenue collector. As the supporter of patriarchal concept of woman as inferior, he calls Binita a whore, because, at first, she is not under protection of man, i.e., her husband who is already dead at bus accident, thus creating suspicion among men about her chastity. Secondly, she lives the life of self-dependent by running a teashop at the bazaar of Khaireni Tar, which means to defy the male-versed rules and systems, which accept only the woman's dependence upon man.

Binita Dahal is another victim of politico-socio-economic realities, joined by the writer with other women, for all of them are hard sufferers in this patriarchal society. In this type of society, woman's voice or her decision is not heard or valued in the events like marriage, but parents arrange it for their daughter. Binita, who had already gone against the patriarchs by joining the college where only boys would be expected to come, takes daring decision to elope with the teacher, Rajesh Dahal, which was to stand against the male-versed/patriarchal social system. Binita is ignored mercilessly by her parents to take her back to their house, after her husband, Rajesh dies in bus accident leaving Binita to live jeopardized life, for she had defied the conventional rules by eloping with a man instead of doing arranged marriage. Having remained alone to struggle in the world to survive, she runs teashop at bazaar with the help of Thakalni-aama, who herself runs a restaurant and rears many persons.

What is very much disappointing is that society begins to suspect a woman, after she defies the constraints imposed by men. As a woman is supposed to be enclosed

within the house to do only household works and be utter dependent upon man economically and socially, her triumph to depend on herself means to challenge the patriarchs and conventional rules. The patriarchs can not digest individuality of women or their capacity to survive by themselves. Women are taken to be those who are to be swayed by whims. So, Binita is doubted by the society that she sells something 'more' than the cups of tea.

The gender discrimination has already been indoctrinated into the psyche of men in patriarchal society. To go against the commands and desires of men is taken to be demeaned and to instigate criticisms in men. As Sani tries to defend herself against patriarchal exploitation, she is called 'mean-spirited', 'cowherd' and 'common' girl by the society. Seventeen-year-old girl, Madhu, alias Sani, is the cousin sister of widow Binita and lives in latter's teashop with the family of Binita that includes Tripti, small daughter to Binita.

Woman's self-respect is doomed, she is lowered into insignificance without individuality, status and good name and she is defamed in the society in such a way that she is to suffer the scything thorns and hurdles of life forever, only after she stands strong against the possibility of male's ill-treatment to her. She is supposed to be the possession of male leaving no option to her except accepting any male who is to claim over her. Sani becomes the victim of the very fact mentioned above living in tradition-bound patriarchal society. Undoubtedly Sani is good and perfect girl whom the most boys longed for and the most parents called 'shiny jewel' and wanted to make their own daughter-in-law. She could be married to any young man either in Indian Gurkhas or, at least, in Nepal army.

All of Sani's friends eulogize her dazzling beauty and acute perfection and envy her beauty which dominates over all of them. Thus, Manjushree Thapa writes:

...Sani, the comely cousin sister of the widow Binita, had grown into a teenager whose prospects of marriage were excellent. For wasn't there a mole on her chin, and didn't her face radiate like the moon on a summer's night? And she worked all day without tire, without a word of complaint.

(30)

The doom's days come on her life in spite of herself which turn dramatically her from the most beautiful girl to mean-spirited girl for the wrongs she never did. This surprisingly dramatic fall of Sani is the result of her avoidance of Khadka boy, possibly the ugliest and weakest boy in Khairani Tar, whom neither Nepal army nor Nepal Police would enlist and Gurkha recruiters would die laughing at him. This is the most probable response to come from the girl on the highest demand to the offer from the ugliest men, who inspire nothing more than pity in the heart of few married women. Sani is apparently suited to marry Rawal boy from India, who is the strongest and most desirable man among girls including Sani's friends.

This Khadka boy constantly follows her wherever she goes from the corn field to the tap, until she cries 'go' like a madwoman to him, who finally with terrific dare has come to the teashop to stand just an arm's reach away from her. Though this terrific young boy leaves this place immediately because of fear, this event becomes wrongly known by the people throughout the society. As he mentions her name to his friends, the true patriarchs, she is defamed in such a way that she has no options to live in the society

except to offer that boy for marriage. Even then, she is rejected by the boy, who thinks of himself far superior to her.

The social surroundings shape the mind and behavior of the people and most of the members of the society are overwhelmed and dominated by the old conventions and stereotypical notions. A man born, grown up and living in a society apparently adopts and adapts its rules and conventions. This Khadka boy is a victim of patriarchal systems and notions also concerning women and, so, defames Sani first and then rejects her compelled offer which means that Sani will have to suffer incalculably in the future, as she has already been made unable to face or show her face to the people in the society. Miss Thapa depicts such the picture of young girl who inspire tears in the eyes of the readers and intends to show how a female teenager suffers in the patriarchal society only because of her effort to defend herself against mistreatment and to save her prestige; her chastity.

Another instance of males' avoidance of female's plight is found near 'twined-together bar-peepal' tree. Near this tree, which stands at the center of the bazaar of Khairani Tar, the bangle seller always waits for her customers peacefully in her stall. Though she does not bargain with anyone, she is teased by the people crying foul. She is completely unimpressed by the political hubbub produced by the arrival of Nayan Raj, the one-time number one cinema hero and, now, the candidate of the People's Party. She reasonably disliked the gatherings of men near her stall, where she has to attract only lady customers. To disappoint her, the bazaar now is filled with men and only men and the gathering of men around her stall would obstruct the way of female customers to come to her stall. Here, upcoming election has caused the economic crisis for this bangle seller,

who is to depend for survival upon the money earned from selling the bangles, because of the all time presence of men around her stall, who are totally unconcerned with the plight of poor women like this bangle seller.

Despite the fact that polygamy has been restricted by law, it is still practiced and encouraged in the places like Khairani Tar, which in different way makes women suffer, as shown by Miss Thapa in the novel. Not only Jimmawal Sharma, but also the Sub-Inspector of Police is polygamist living a happy life in the society. Hom Kumari, the first wife of this man, suffers mentally and is threatened economically suddenly after her husband brings a Magar girl beyond Hom Kumari's previous knowledge to the home as his second wife. But, the womanly heart of Hom Kumari accepts the share of new bride for her husband's love as well as property, because Hom Kumari does not find any fault of new woman to blame. Soon, they begin to live under the same roof sharing sisterly love with each other forgetting the incident caused mainly by their husband, the Sub-Inspector.

Backwardness of women in education sector is made clear by Manju in this novel, as we see that possibly widow Binita was only the woman in Khairani Tar with intermediate degree, though she had to struggle hard to go to the college, as girls were not allowed to go far from home to study or to attend colleges. Sani, at the age of seventeen, is merely learning few alphabets at the adult literacy class. This deprivation of education leads Sani to the suffering from rejection of Khadka boy to her offer. This very boy had previously loved her the most and like a mad boy followed her everywhere. On the other hand, Binita happens to choose the wrong path shown by another patriarch Rajesh Dahal, her own teacher who, instead of providing teacher-like good suggestions to her, attacks

her chastity and compels her to elope with him, only because of her attendance at the college to study. Here, we can see that every woman has to suffer in this or that way due to the educational system produced by men only in the favor of men marginalizing women.

The concept of son-ship is prevalent in Khairani Tar and people sympathizes a man who has no son. Chiranjibi Joshi, the construction contractor and the wealthiest man of Khairani Tar, is the man who does not have any son, but many daughters only. Thapa writes in the novel, “Seeing him people said: A man so rich, but with six daughters, no heirs. They felt sorry for him” (101), because only the son is the person to enhance the branches of the family. This extreme ‘son-ship’ is to cause suffering to the daughters who are taken to be the burden by their parents.

Women suffer politically too in Khairani Tar apparently during election time, as we see that most of the men in the novel, are found participating enthusiastically in politics in some way, while, except countable women, no lady is concerned to politics. Talking of political parties concerning women’s place in it, we see:

The small conservative Rastriya Prajatantra Party had no following in this electorate, but it had decided this year to field a woman from here – because the five percent quota for women candidates had to be filled somehow. The RPP’s lady candidate was too shy to come to the party office, and the lone office guard, nodding off at the door, gave the building an abandoned look. (16)

This shows exactly the political status of women in the country which is no doubt ruled by the men only, as only five percent women can be the candidates of each party,

but, even then, they get tickets for election only for that electorate number where a male candidate from another party is supposed to win. Thus, women are deprived of the Government or decision making with few exceptions, though they cover half the voters of the country. Indeed, in this sense, the politics is a useless thing, as mentioned by a wise woman Asha, which discriminates the women who are in any way to suffer perpetually in their life.

Binita Dahal is the most pitiable sufferer among all the female characters in this novel written by Manjushree Thapa who places Binita at the center of the novel and draws our attention to her plight. All the incidents are interrelated to each other and pivot around this young woman, who survives by herself after her husband's death. She struggles hard alone against all the miseries of life and daringly stands high with her feet upon the piles of conventional rules and regulations that are male-biased.

After opening a teashop to sustain herself, her daughter Tripti and cousin sister Sani, widow Binita has to face lots of male customers, while serving tea to them. She maintains reserve with strangers and townspeople and runs successfully her teashop at the bazaar. In spite of her well educational status, she has to do such a work to survive with tremendous risks. To avoid any danger that can be caused by men, she creates such an atmosphere that nobody can mistreat her. As Miss Thapa writes:

And she had found some good uses for tradition: it was with cool deliberation that she had decorated her teashop with posters of Shiva and Parvati in the high Himalayas, the goddess Saraswati riding a swan, Radha and Krishna embracing in the woods, a dancing Ganesha, and Lakshmi

bejeweled and bright. Men did not misbehave in these sanctified surroundings. Men didn't think to move in on her. (7)

This is the way, she uses the tradition, which allows the men to dominate, discriminate and exploit women, against men, as she knows that men are in no way bound by the conventions. Here, Manjushree suggests that the convention, which is produced by men, can be turned against them too by women who are vulnerable to the crimes to be committed by men.

Binita is thought to be a witch by Jimmawal Sharma; a witch who sucked her husband's blood until he died. On the other hand, despite her effort to distract male customers' ill-intention to the reverence for the deities by hanging the posters of Hindu gods goddesses on the walls of her teashop, she is abused physically by her husband's uncle Kainlo-kaka, the patriarch of Dahal clan with great authority. Once Binita had been offered by the wife of Kainlo-kaka to live with them, the family of Kainlo-kaka, in their house which is an hour's walk south from the bazaar of Khaireni Tar, 'across Seti river'. This tradition-bound wife of Kainlo-kaka calls Binita to her home, only because, by living self-dependently, Binita had defied the patriarchal rules, which do not allow any daughter-in-law to work for herself, but seek to engage her inside the house, where she is obliged to work twenty four hours for the family members and must be dependent upon the patriarch of the house economically as well as socially. This wife of Kainlo-kaka even tried to persuade her to live with them, meaning that Binita would have to do the household works like a servant, by saying that the people think that she is selling more than just cups of tea. Besides, even though Binita would agree to live in their house with them doing all the household words, she would not be allowed to cook for herself and her

small daughter in the kitchen, which would be defiled by her presence over there, but outside the house using the clay stove. This old woman, possibly at the age similar to that of Binita's own mother, is completely succumbed to the traditions that puts male at superiority and female at inferiority. Binita has already suffered from the traditional woman in her life by eloping; her own mother stood against her for breaking the convention of arranged marriage and restricted strictly her from returning to the house of her parents after Rajesh's death. One day Kainlo-kaka followed Binita to a shed at the back of the house and committed a sin, which was unimaginable, against her. Having committed the crime against her, he laughed strangely and pushed her away. Instead of providing the parental love, guidance and security to the widow daughter-in-law, he abuses her physically behind the house brutally with animalistic passion. In this way, she becomes the victim of physical violence done by an animal in the form of a man. Dumbfound by never guessed, unexpected and unbelievable rush of such an authority, she passively bears the exploitation with uncertain future too. This brutal man, however, thinks her as an object or playing thing to be enjoyed and thrown away and gives physical as well as mental torture to her, completely defenseless against such crimes.

Living in the society dominated by orthodox patriarchs, Binita suffers from the abuses, as a woman is thought to be like an animal or an object by the representatives of the patriarchal society. Her individuality, feelings, pain and future are nothing for these men who hold the power to discriminate and violate women. Though she may want to punish such the sinner, she will always stand helpless; the rages inside her prepared to storm through her. Contrasting the ill-natured mentality and evil spirit inside Kainlo-kaka

with his outward concern for the prosperity of Dahal clan and fatherliness, Manjushree Thapa writes:

Before an audience of relatives Kainlo-kaka's movements were choreographed to a show of fatherliness: he spoke fondly of Nayan Raj's parents, tracked back their ancestry, boasted of bloodlines and declared everlasting loyalties. He took all the authority his position gave him. He took all the power his place as the head of the family allowed him. Binita stood in tense proximity to him, this man who had plotted – would still plot - to turn her into a wretch; this man who would readily punish her; if he got a chance, for her wil(l)fulness. He would want her to move at his bidding....she stiffened even as she let him reveal to her his duplicity.

(207)

These lines reflect the true nature of the men in patriarchal society, who would play the dubious roles in the public and private sphere. Outwardly, they may look loving and caring man, but inwardly animalistic passions and demonic cruelty always arise in them which do nothing but lead them to exploit women and leave these pitiable women suffer throughout their life.

Binita's teashop did not serve alcohol to the customers and, so, the men with evil desire to pass the evening with raucous exchanges never appeared there. Indeed, she must be cautious in the teashop, because she has marked many times that her male customers always roved their eyes over her in such a way, as though instead of tea and snacks, she herself was on offer in her teashop. Only within few months of her husband's death, her new customers, her late husband's colleagues and friends had begun to treat her with an

unpleasant presumptuousness. They tried to cajole her to let herself succumb to these men. Indeed, in the teashop, which lacked a male, Binita and her daughter would have no protection, if anyone wished to harm them. She was anyway vulnerable to mistreatment and ill-natured behavior in her teashop.

After the arrival of her brother-in-law, Nayan Raj, Binita gets security having a male in the house which meant no possibility of harm to her, but the respect only. She notices that people were paying her great attention, as one vendor gives her two bananas at free-cost and another asks her how she was and the number of customers increases in her teashop, unusual in the rain. But, this security in the house and respect in the bazaar are at the cost of her identity, for afterwards, she will be known through her brother-in-law as Binita Bhauju – sister-in-law – and her continuous service to him and the people from Dahal family. For the duration of election, she would take care of him, feed him, take care of him, cook for him, clean up after him and make his stay comfortable. “When Nayan Raj arrived, there had been nothing for her to do but to serve everyone as the family’s daughter-in-law” (135). After Nayan Raj leaves with all the relatives the house, the house/teashop is left in a shambles. The scraps of food are scattered about and teacup has broken. Every thing feels defiled and Binita feels debased. She, however, does not utter any hard word, but remains obedient and submissive betraying herself.

Indeed, now Binita’s purpose in this house was nothing but to cook and clean and by this time she no longer controlled the house. Nayan Raj was master from now on and his relatives, loyal minors. She thinks of Kainlo-kaka who would come every day and would summon her to serve him. She should move as he bid her to never rebelling; a shame to have to live in such fear. She is judged by the men coming to dine here, who

stood as her proprietors. In this way, in spite of herself, she is entrapped inside the house with the household works by men and she has now no individuality, but the status of older sister-in-law, who is to serve constantly off the people coming to the teashop, as the daughter-in-law of Dahal family. Everyone called her 'Bhauju' – older sister-in-law, "Wife of Nayan Raj's older brother. An older relation to all men, a woman to be respected. This link from husband to brother-in-law, from man to man, safeguarded her". (207-208)

After marrying a man twice older than her, Binita had to live alone at her youth and, so. Naturally, she enjoys the presence of men and imagines herself being accompanied by men. She knows, however, that she must not show any of her enjoyment, which she learnt in her wilderness years to avoid the possibility of criticisms against her. Suddenly, Rishi Parajuli comes in the life of Binita to show some affection to her. For him, she liked surprisingly young from certain angles and liked that she remained aloof. He is the first and only person to address Binita as Binitaji, a formal and pleasant term which refused family ties. Being impressed by his formal address to her, Binita too addresses him formally by calling him Rishiji. To add to her disappointment, Rishi suggests her to join the group which helps mistreated women find the support of each other. Rishi, who has already exploited a young girl Radhika, sees Binita as mistreated woman seeking for pity from other men like Rishi himself, which would, thus, boast of power and dominate her in pretense of providing her security from the men like him. The indoctrinated concepts of 'male's superiority and female's inferiority' and 'male's domination over female' are apparent in every man, like Rishi Parajuli, living in the patriarchal society.

Manjushree Thapa poignantly presents the age-old suffering and repression of women of Nepal, but hints also at the gust of rebellion which is to stir the castle made of male's selfish ego. Women are not to keep on suffering the exploitation, discrimination and violence from men. They are surely to bind together to make themselves strong to fight the men and destroy the patriarchal male-biased rules and systems.

The slow emancipation of the women of Khaireni Tar is apparent in the novel, if we gaze at the hints indicated by the writer. She writes, "Young girls no longer consented to illiteracy but clamoured to go to school" (14). From Jimmawal Sharma's muttering, we come to know that in these days, not all the women followed the rules during monthly cyclic period or observed the separation. Defying the convention of arranged marriage in the patriarchal society, young girls have begun to decide herself to whom they should marry. The young girls frankly discuss about the boys and elopement of their friends in Khaireni Tar. Indeed, harvest was the time, "groups of boys and groups of girls would work together, as they always did. There would be bantering and teasing and flirting, there would be dinging, and there might be love...Every few years a girl eloped at harvest time" (79).

The illiterate women decide to educate themselves attending first-ever adult literacy class which is started in Khaireni Tar at the insistence of Hom Kumari, the elder wife of the Sub-Inspector of Police. Now pencil no longer feels strange between the fingers of these women and they begin to learn all thirty six letters of Nepali alphabet. Every night, the teacher lectures them about women's development and urges them constantly to form a mother's group. He encourages them with the words that only then,

they will be able to do the things for the development of women and they must not forget the fact that women occupy half the earth and hold up half the sky.

Thakalni-aama is an old woman whose campaign is to help other helpless women to develop themselves. She employs several women at her restaurant and helped Binita to open a teashop to be self-dependent. Binita was also helped by her through her pregnancy and later on continuously in her life. Thakalni-aama is the very woman who encourages other women of a mother's group by presenting herself at the meeting and initiating the dance in the public.

Here in literacy class, the teacher continues imparting the revolutionary ideas into the mind of these women that they should form a group in order to shake the pillars of patriarchy or 'patty-archy', as Madhu utters. He gives them pressure not only to learn letters but also to make a habit of 'thinking' for the betterment of themselves.

Women's equality in the society with men is discussed and put forward as an issue by those young girls who are studying at the college campuses. They know that the political parties never did anything for women, but left them to suffer always in the life. As they discuss about the equality of women in the party office, other men, the representatives of patriarchal society, cackle at them saying such matters against patriarchy. Radio Nepal, representing the world for those illiterate women, also talks about the women's development in these days. Paramila argues in the teashop where sometimes educated young girls from colleges came to talk of equal rights for women.

As an inspiration to the suffering and underdeveloped women of Khaireni Tar, the women of Dhorphirdi form a mother's group and collect five thousand rupees. They sing and dance at every house and successfully build a temple with the money they raised

showing their capacity similar to that of men to the society. Hom Kumari is much encouraged by this incident and she decides to form a similar type of mother's group, if other women helped her.

Gaumati is one of the revolutionary women by nature juxtaposed with Sani, latter being utterly submissive and suppressed girl. She claims that a girl can't be weak-minded any more. She cries, "If the world accuses her wrongly, she has to say: I've done nothing wrong. How will we ever do women's development otherwise?"(229)

Now, the women form a mother's group headed by the ascetic's wife and Hom Kumari and these two women ask all the mothers to come and join the group and go house to house. The sole purpose of forming mother's group is to help all the mistreated women find each other's support to come out of the suffering caused by men. These women begin to think of their intelligence so much so that one woman claims herself to be more intelligent than her husband who is educated and holds the job at the government office.

All the members of a mother's group begin their campaigning as they move from house to house, singing, clapping, dancing, entreating each family for help with Akala-mai's shrine, and continuing happily as people made donations. The scenario was that Hom Kumari and Lalita are seen dancing together, both of them, the wives of Sub-Inspector, who must have intended to put them in sharp contrast or in the dual. They sway in the service to Akala-mai sacrificing their time, energy and good names for the goddess. The shrine of the goddess Alala-mai, which these women want to repair as their first task, lay a short way beyond the flatlands. As these women raise close to eight thousand rupees, an overseer was called to estimate for the cost of repairs to Akala-mai's

shrine which was almost entirely broken down on one side, where a young banyan tree had pushed out its walls. Also the roof had caved in and needed repair. These women, after meeting at the shrine, begins to clear weeds from the surroundings and pluck the patch of thistles growing on the shrine's cracked wall. They also pick wildflowers off the shrine's back wall and with the sharp edge of a stone moss is scraped off the ridges if the idol. In this way, the women succeed in doing the social work as capably as men are and by dancing and singing publicly, which is supported even by those women who are not allowed to join the group, as such women happily smile under the cover of 'faria' at their dance and song, these women has strongly defied the patriarchal rules and customs. They first educate themselves and form a mothers' group to make themselves daring to face the men and fight against all the discriminations and mistreatments meted out to them by men living in the patriarchal society.

Manjushree Thapa opines that the restoration of democracy in 2046 B.S. gifted Nepalese women with the conscience. With the dawn of democracy, many Nepalese women formed many non-governmental organizations in order to liberate innocent women from the plight of discrimination, exploitation and suffering. She introduces in her novel mother's groups to be acutely defensive against the exploitation of women in male-dominated society. The mother's group formed in Khaireni Tar in the novel not only helps to solve women's problem, but also do some social works like repairing the Akala-mai's shrine dauntlessly challenging the capacity of men. Their bold dance and songs are in some ways the challenge and revolt against the strict male-versed traditions which put harsh criticism and opposition to such the things.

Finally, we can say that through this novel, Manjushree Thapa seeded to convey the message that even after the restoration of democracy in Nepal, women are still dominated, exploited and discriminated by men who hold the great authority and power in the society and the country. The age-old suffering of women in the patriarchal society is still continuing in some places of the country, as presented in the novel; despite the fact that the consciousness of equality and right has begun to grow in the mind of women, who are on the way to revolt with extreme force collectively against the patriarchal social systems, values and attitudes that yet perpetuate the notions of inferiority of women and superiority of men. The concluding ideas in the next chapter will provide the final analysis of and critical response to the text and summarizes the writer's true message concerning women's suffering.

IV WOMEN: HOPE AND LIBERATION

The Tutor of History of Manjushree Thapa has played the crucial role for bringing some hidden aspects of Nepal to the recognition of the people throughout the world. This novel not only brings in light the degeneration of Nepali political party leaders, but also poignantly demonstrates the true plight of women living in such places like Khaireni Tar. The textual analysis of the novel leads to the conclusion that Manjushree Thapa, while treating the problem and dealing with the position of Nepali women, reveals how this male-versed patriarchal social system, attitudes, convention and norms become an obstacle on the path of women's progress, dignity and prosperity and instigate men to dominate, discriminate and exploit innocent women and perpetuate the suffering of women. Manjushree presents the plight of suffering women on the one hand and indicates the way to be out of their suffering on the other.

Miss Thapa shows how Nepalese women are becoming commodities for men and are forced to live the life of suffering like animals. The female protagonist of the novel, widow Binita suffers physically as well as mentally throughout her life, but never loses her patience and keeps on facing boldly every misfortune caused whether by fate or by men. Manjushree wants to impart the idea that women have to endure pain or suffering in their life in the patriarchal society; the society must stop causing suffering to women for happiness, peace and prosperity.

This novel revolves around the problems and suffering of Binita Dahal and other women who all are the victims of exploitation and their daring effort to revolt against gender discrimination prevalent in the Nepalese societies has been highly focused. Though Binita suffers only the isolation from the people, after breaking the convention of

arranged marriage by eloping with a man, her suffering and miseries are added, when her young husband, though twice older than her, who seduces her, a student at the college where he teaches, and compels her to elope with him, dies at bus accident. Then to survive, she has to open a teashop with many risks to be taken, as male customers long more for her than for tea and snacks. The pathetic predicament of Binita becomes heart-rending when her own husband's uncle abuses her physically instead of protecting her from the possibility of ill-treatment of other men. This unexpected sinful violation of Binita by her own father-in-law, who holds the supreme authority in Dahal family, brings also the mental crisis to her. Though she is intermediate-passed young woman, she does not get any good job, but has to serve the strangers with cups of tea to survive.

The arrival of Nayan Raj, Binita's brother-in-law, provides security to her for a while, but still then, she not only loses her self-identity but also has to serve all the people from Dahal family in her teashop like a servant without uttering any word of complain and she has to obey Kainlo-kaka too, who once defiled her chastity. So, Binita suffers much also because of the socio-economic structure of the society. The patriarchal social system is male-biased of which she becomes the victim. She is played as a doll even by her brother-in-law, who, by giving her money, compels her to serve him and his people.

Madhu becomes mean-spirited, common, coward and treacherous girl in the eyes of the people, only when she defends herself against ill intension of a boy and saves her chastity courageously. Laxmi, a timid and insecure woman, who confines herself to her house in the northern hills, is constantly beaten by her drunkard husband.

Miss Thapa presents the idea that gender-discrimination is a result of patriarchal social system which subjects and subjugates women in every sphere of their life. She has the view that this system favors men and places them on the top of social hierarchy whereas women are placed on the bottom.

Finally, Thapa seeks to trace the hope for women's liberation from all kinds of suffering. The continuous discrimination, exploitation and domination of women by men in the long run compel women to bind together and fight against male's mistreatment to the women. They form a mother's group not only to solve women's problems and develop them but also to defend themselves collectively against any exploitation meted by the men. In this way, though Manjushree Thapa depicts the miserable condition of Nepalese women suffering hard in the patriarchal society, she also hints at the hope for the liberation of women from suffering.

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